

D. Remarks

The claims are 3 and 5-10, with claims 3, 5 and 6 being independent. Claims 1, 2 and 4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Each of claims 3, 5 and 6 has been amended to be in independent form; each of claims 8 and 9 have been amended to be in dependent form. All amendments are fully supported in the specification as originally filed. Reconsideration of the present claims is respectfully requested.

The specification has been generally amended in order to correct minor typographical errors and to be more consistent with proper idiomatic English. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added.

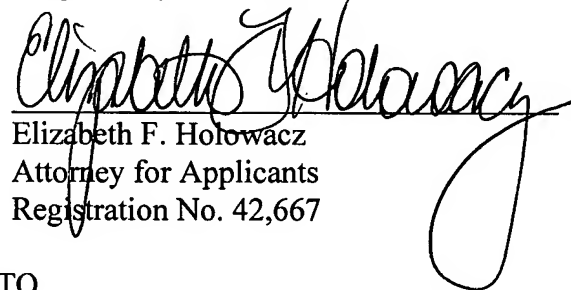
Claims 1, 2, 4 and 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Imanaka (U.S. Patent No. 6,688,729). While Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, Applicants have nonetheless cancelled claim 1 (as well as claims 2 and 4) and incorporated its subject matter into each of claims 3, 5 and 6; each of independent claims 8 and 9 have also been amended to be dependent upon one of claims 3, 5 and 6. Such cancellations and amendments were made without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4 and 8-10 is now moot and should be withdrawn.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 3 and 5-7 were directed to allowable subject matter. In that regard, Applicants have now amended each of claims 3, 5 and 6 to be in independent form; the remaining claims depend in some way from those newly independent claims. Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable reconsideration and passage to issue of the present case is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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